

Your First Meeting

The purpose of the first meeting is to introduce the fledgling association to your neighbors. The format should motivate the community not just to attend, but to encourage continued involvement.

Some ideas for a first meeting include:

- ***Invite a well known speaker.***
Local elected or appointed officials are always good choices. Other speakers could include a local author or a media personality.
- ***Provide food.*** A summer cookout is a family-friendly option. Choose a nearby park, or at mid-block.
- ***Discuss a current problem.***
Nothing motivates better than crisis. Make sure that you've invited partners likely to help you resolve the problem.

First Meeting Do's and Don'ts

- **DO** provide name-tags to help new residents get to know each other
- **DO** keep the agenda light and focused on relationship building
- **DO** focus on identifying issues of concern
- **DO** ask for volunteers to research issues and report back
- **DO** emphasize the value of organization vs. individual action
- **DON'T** forget to offer food and provide a pleasant atmosphere
- **DON'T** cast the meeting as a debate or vote on particular solutions.
- **DON'T** get bogged down in conflicts between individuals.